

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS

ARISE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE; ¿OISTE?;
NEW ENGLAND STATE-AREA
CONFERENCE OF THE NAACP; REV.
TALBERT W. SWAN, II; NORMAN W.
OLIVER; DARLENE ANDERSON;
GUMERSINDO GOMEZ; FRANK BUNTIN;
RAFAEL RODRIQUEZ; and DIANA NURSE,

Plaintiffs,

v.

CITY OF SPRINGFIELD and SPRINGFIELD
ELECTION COMMISSION,

Defendants.

Civil Action No. 05-30080 MAP

TRIAL AFFIDAVIT OF LILLIAN SANTIAGO

I, Lillian Santiago, hereby certify as follows:

1. I am a Latina resident of Holyoke MA and was a named plaintiff in the *Vecinos De Barrio Uno v. City of Holyoke* voting rights litigation.
2. Up until last week I was an elected member of the Holyoke City Council from Ward 1.
3. Since the lawsuit, other than Alejandro Sanchez, who was elected to an at-large city council seat in 1997 and served for only one 2-year term as an at-large councilor, there has never been any Latino elected to an at-large seat in Holyoke.
4. For the most part, there have never been more than two Latinos serving on the Holyoke City Council at one time. Generally Latinos have only been elected from Ward 1 and Ward 2.
5. In approximately 2002, after a white City Councilor from Ward 4 died, Mildred Santana was appointed to fill out the remainder of his term. This was for approximately 6 months, and was the only time there were three Latinos on the City Council at the same time.

FROM :

FAX NO. : 4135361158

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6. Despite being an incumbent, Mildred Santana was defeated in 2003 when she ran for election for the Ward 4 seat. She was later also defeated in 2005 for the Ward 4 seat. In each case a white male candidate won, despite Ward 4 having a population that is predominantly Latino. There are 2 elderly housing buildings in Ward 4 that are predominantly white with high voter turnout and these voters repeatedly veto the choices of the majority Latino voters in Ward 4.
7. There are 15 City Council seats in Holyoke, with 8 elected at large and 7 elected from Wards. Latinos have generally only been able to get elected from Wards 1 and 2.
8. For School Committee there are 7 ward seats and 2 at-large seats. There has never been a Latino elected to an at-large School Committee seat. There are two Latinos on the School Committee elected from districts.
9. Latinos have little political power in Holyoke. The at-large city council seats are generally used as a stepping stone to running for Mayor and other political offices, and Latino candidates have not had a serious chance to win the at-large seats.

Signed under the pains and penalties of perjury this 13 day of March 2007.



Lillian Santiago

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that this document filed through the ECF system will be sent electronically to the registered participants as identified on the Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) and paper copies will be sent to those indicated as non registered participants on March 13, 2007.

/s/ Paul E. Nemser